

Five Quick Ways to Manage Stress Right Now



1. DEEP BREATHS

Slow racing thoughts and relax knotted muscles by breathing deeply and slowly, at least ten minutes. Put one hand on your stomach. Make sure it rises with each breath. Avoid fast, shallow chest breaths that increase tension. Breathe in through your nose and exhale through your mouth.



2. VISUALIZATION

Picture your favorite place to relax. Beach? Woods? Hiking trail? Keep a picture in your office or on your refrigerator. Pause to feel, hear, and smell your special place. Be there, and the next time you visit your place of contentment, anchor more vivid images to access when your stress cycle begins to escalate.



3. POSITIVE SELF TALK

Don't buy into negative mental responses to stress. Run positive messages through your mind. Use your voice. Say, "Of course I can handle this, I know I can do it." Think of something positive like dinner with your spouse or your daughter's soccer game. Say to yourself "I'm really looking forward to this evening."



4. PRIORITIZE

Write down your top three priorities for the day. Put the rest aside. If possible, stop answering your phone or email for thirty minutes. Collect yourself. Focus. When priorities change, pitch that note and write another with only three points. Don't think too far ahead. Stay in the moment. Work on what's in front of you.



5. LAUGH

It's impossible to smile and stay stressed. If you smile when you're talking with a co-worker or smile when you answer your telephone, your stress will unwind. You can also do something that will make yourself laugh or watch a comedy.

Explore stress management resources for UAB employees at uab.edu/codeblaze.